

## **Archival and Historic Analects of Oral Tradition and Early Modern Cypriot History**

**[Αρχειακά και Ιστορικά Ανάλεκτα Προφορικής Παράδοσης και Νεότερης Ιστορίας της Κύπρου]**

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The present volume, authored by Dr Kyprianos Louis and edited by Dr Apostolos Kouroupakis, is a republication of seven articles that originally appeared between the years 2001 and 2013 in conference proceedings, collective volumes, as well as in the *Annual Review of the Cyprus Research Centre*. As stated in its title, the book has a twofold thematic focus: on one hand it explores methodological matters of oral history, applied in the case of the multiphase, longterm research projects for the establishment and development of the Cyprus Research Centre Oral Tradition Archive; and on the other hand, it delves into the Early Modern economic and institutional history of Cyprus, employing Late Ottoman written records as a primary source of study. The rationale behind the publication of this new volume is laid out by the author in his introductory note. According to Louis, the book aims at informing the wider public of the establishment processes, the content, the scientific standards, and the potential exploration opportunities of the Cyprus Research Centre oral history archives, and, more specifically, the Oral Tradition Archive. Moreover, it aspires to showcase how studies based on Ottoman period archival records illuminate aspects of the Early Modern history of Cyprus, broadening the scope of historical analysis and challenging stereotypical narratives about the recent past.

The book is organised in two parts, which reflect its dual thematic axis. The first part comprises three articles, dedicated to the research projects implemented by the Cyprus Research Centre (henceforth CRC) for the development of its largest oral history archive, namely the Oral Tradition Archive (henceforth OTA). The OTA was established in 1990 and during its initial development phase (1990-1998) it was intended to host sound-recorded testimonies of people previously residing in rural areas of the northern part of the island, which has been under Turkish occupation since 1974. In the 2000s, the CRC undertook the task of expanding and completing the

archive's content via the implementation of two funded research projects, covering rural areas under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus, as well as urban centres. In its present form, the OTA features more than 8.000 recorded interviews and remains unique in terms of both the quantity and the quality of amassed oral history data concerning the Cypriot (micro)history and culture from the early 20th century onwards. Its materials are a most valuable source of knowledge for researchers working on modern Cypriot history, geography, culture, folklore, oral literature, and other fields.

The three articles in the first part of the book focus mainly on the later research projects, implemented between 2005-2006, also 2007-2009, under Louis' scientific coordination and direction, for the supplementation of the already existing OTA content with new oral testimonies. Along with a series of preceding articles by the CRC senior researcher Theophano Kypri,<sup>1</sup> namely the leading figure behind the OTA's initial development phase, the three republished articles by Louis provide a most valuable insight into the establishment processes, the development history, and the scientific methodology adopted throughout the archive's long formation period, from its conception up to its completion.

The first two articles are rather similar in terms of examined topics, and comparable or complementary in terms of provided information. As also acknowledged by the author in his introductory note, the replication of information in the first part of the book is to a certain degree inevitable due to the discussion of the same archival formation processes. Thus, both the first and the second article highlight the reasons behind the establishment of the OTA; they briefly describe its four implementation phases and explain the applied fieldwork methodology; define the wide spectrum of topics under investigation, and provide information regarding the methods of archiving the collected data. Furthermore, the first article briefly discusses matters of accessibility to and exploration of the archival data, whilst citing potential risks and providing useful suggestions.

The third article of the first part of the book refers exclusively to the OTA enrichment project, implemented by the CRC in 2005-2006. It describes in detail the multistage training undergone by the two young researchers employed in the framework of the project; provides further information on fieldwork methodology, from

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<sup>1</sup> These articles were first published during the 1990s and early 2000s in the *Annual Review of the Cyprus Research Centre* and in conference proceedings, and later they were compiled in the volume titled *Collective Memory: Studies, Articles, Speeches* (Nicosia: Kyrenia Foklore Society, 2013).

preparation to realisation; discusses archiving practices, and summarises the results of an interesting pilot proposal for introducing oral history in Secondary Education curriculum either as an independent scientific field, or by utilising OTA testimonies as primary sources in teaching specific thematic units of already existing subjects.

The second part of the book features four articles, focusing on questions of Cypriot economy and administration during the Late Ottoman period. A common thread in all four studies is the exploration of Ottoman records maintained in Cypriot Orthodox Church archives, and more specifically in the archives of the Archbishopric of Cyprus and the Holy Bishopric of Kition. These records illuminate the evolving political, administrative, and economic 19th century structures, in which the Cypriot Orthodox Church had a prominent participation.

The first article examines the role of Archbishop Makarios I as head of the Cypriot Orthodox *millet* during the years 1854-1865. To begin with, the author discusses in detail the historical context of Makarios' era, namely a period coinciding with the Ottoman *Tanzimat* modernisation reforms, which had an empire-wide effect. Louis presents the impact of these reforms on the Cypriot governance system, most evident in the establishment of new administrative bodies, and he then proceeds to interpret the effect of introduced changes into the role of the Cypriot Orthodox Church in administration and economy. According to Louis, the participation of the Cypriot Church in mid-19th century state power structures institutionalised and enhanced its authority, even though the form of these novel structures also moderated the Church's political power, allowing the participation of prominent laymen in collective bodies responsible for fiscal and administrative matters. Given the more favourable policy of Ottoman authorities towards the Orthodox Church of Cyprus in the context of the *Tanzimat* reforms, under Makarios' leadership the Church managed to secure more rights and increased its jurisdiction over Greek Orthodox community issues. Another great accomplishment of Makarios was the promotion of education as a means of both material prosperity and spiritual development, with the massive expansion of primary education in urban centres and major rural communities.

The following article examines the exploitation of the Pyla *çiftlik* by the Holy Bishopric of Kition, between the years 1833 and 1838. This remarkable study sheds light on local particularities of the Late Ottoman *çiftlik* economy, which appears across the Ottoman Empire from the 17th century onwards, in many regional modes and variations. The emergence of *çiftliks*, namely extensive, cultivated landed estates, is generally associated to the rise of large-scale commercial agriculture in the Ottoman

Empire. According to Louis, during the period under study, the Cypriot agricultural production was completely commercialised and the *çiftlik* productive units were oriented towards meeting the needs of primarily foreign markets. Following the 1821 upheaval, the Cypriot Church, namely a major economic actor aiming at being reinstated to its former position, is known from primary sources to have turned to *çiftlik* leasing for generating income. A codex preserved at the Holy Bishopric of Kition documents all the economic transactions related to the exploitation of the Pyla *çiftlik*, which was situated near the prominent commercial centre of Larnaka. Using this important primary source, the author describes in brief the physical environment and material culture of the *çiftlik*, including cultivated land, animals, buildings, and equipment; reconstructs the *çiftlik* managerial system; specifies the different categories of employed workforce, and lists the various types of cultivated crops, also evaluating their contribution to the overall *çiftlik* income, along with stock-farming and beekeeping. Based on the records' numerical data, Louis calculates the yearly profit made by the Kition Bishopric during the period under study, and subsequently provides an analysis of the expenses and the incomes deriving from the exploitation of the *çiftlik*. The examination also documents the existence of a more complex web of economic relations, since, along with the Church, important foreign merchants were also investing in the *çiftlik* production, to secure cash products for exports.

The next article delves into further questions regarding the Late Ottoman economic history, focusing on the fiscal administration system operating in Cyprus during the period 1830-1839/40. The study analyses the local administrative structures, which developed in the wider context of the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reforms, and which also aimed at encountering the economic stagnation and population decline on the island in the aftermath of the 1821 events. Based on archival records, the author sheds light into the operation of the Community of the Cypriots (*Κοινό Κυπρίων*), a communal institution managing the financial duties of the Greek Orthodox Community of Cyprus towards the Ottoman state. The Community, which operated under the Sultan's authority, comprised different bodies with distinct jurisdictions: the Church Hierarchy (*Εκκλησιαστική Ιεραρχία*), the central Council of Elders (*Δημογεροντία*), the Committee of the Community (*Επιτροπή του Κοινού*), and the General Assembly of the Community (*Γενική Συνέλευση του Κοινού*). Louis explores the role of the aforementioned bodies, reconstructs the tax designation and collection system, and examines the different categories of incomes and expenses of the Community.

The fourth and final article looks further into matters of fiscal administration

during the Late Ottoman period, this time presenting the relevant extant registries in the Archive of the Archbishopric of Cyprus. These records were produced due to the Church's active involvement in matters of fiscal administration during the period 1800-1839/40, and are thus extremely valuable for documenting the Church's economic activities and policies. The author commences the analysis by sketching the historical backdrop and listing the sources under study, broadly classifying the registries according to their content. Next, he presents the tax designation and collection system operating in Cyprus during the period under study, thus providing the framework for the creation of the registries. After referring briefly to the criteria for the typological categorisation of economic registries, he proceeds with a detailed analysis of registries per type, as follows: 1. name lists of the Greek Orthodox, adult male population subject to taxation (1820, 1825/6), as well as of Cypriot emigrants, 2. registries documenting tax collection by officials appointed by the Church or other subcontractors, 3. registries for the collection of sums covering regular and emergency expenses, the former for expenditure of the local Ottoman administration, and the latter for the needs of troops brought from Karamania to face the 1804 uprising, and troops sent from Syria during the years 1822-1823 to re-establish order after the 1821 events, 4. lists of properties confiscated during the 1821 events, as well as name lists of Christian taxpayers who fled Cyprus during the same period and then returned, entering again the taxpaying system, 5. the main registry of tax or other public income sources leasing, collecting, and paying, as well as of the arrangement of administration expenses. In the final part of his examination, Louis points out potential future methodological directions of study and highlights the multifaceted value of the aforementioned sources for the examination of demographic, social, economic, cultural, and linguistic phenomena.

To sum up, this new volume that draws together several past studies successfully meets its initial aims. Its first part introduces the public -not only general but also scientific- to a uniquely important, large-scale oral history program carried out in Cyprus for decades, showcasing the highly scientific standards applied in its different stages, from fieldwork preparation and realisation to archiving. The demonstrated value of the Oral Tradition Archive renders even more crucial its proper maintenance and management, to make it better known to and easily accessible by both researchers and the general public. The second part of the book succeeds in revealing the potential of studies exploring Ottoman economic and institutional history through the examination of archival primary sources. Up to recently, the study of economy

remained peripheral to Early Modern Cypriot history, especially since scholarly research traditionally emphasised the examination of political events. Louis' original studies highlight the value of archival materials for the documentation and interpretation of economic, and at the same time social, demographic, and cultural phenomena, and in this respect, they introduce into Cypriological studies current trends in the field of Ottoman history. Although some of the questions discussed in the republished studies call for a more detailed analysis and presentation, Louis' work paves the path for new and more extensive research on similar, understudied topics.

**Petroula Hadjittofi**